

Dear Chris,

I was glad to hear of your plans for a book. I think your argument for a reconsideration of the U.S. tradition in experimental film is important.

I'm very interested in writing on Mr. Motorboat's Last Stand, and perhaps on Little Geezer, which I've not seen. I could write it next summer. What length were you thinking of? Would I be able to use frame enlargements? If so, how many? Are the films 16mm?

I have a long standing interest in Paul Strand's work too, but I really only have time to write one essay.

Let me know how the plans progress, and what the other contributors will be writing about.

Best,

Chuck Kleinhans

encl.

Chuck Kleinhans  
Associate Professor  
Radio/TV/Film  
Northwestern University

2620 N. Richmond  
Chicago IL 60647

Mr. Motorboat's Last Stand (John Flory and Theodore Huff)

The film successfully draws on mass culture conventions such as those found in silent film comedy while presenting a trenchant social and political analysis of the Great Depression in class and race terms. A close analysis demonstrates the technique of its wit and critique. The film stands as an example of "Brechtian" cinema, avant le mot. The historical context of the film develops with reference to other experimental radical art of the period, particularly the theatre. The film challenges several current critical/historical orthodoxies. First, it calls for a reconsideration of the importance of narrative and left politics in the history of U.S. experimental film. Second, it marks an important artistic achievement in the history of radical art in the Thirties, one neglected by cultural historians and even by historians of left film, who have concentrated on documentary.